

25X1

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Memorandum



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 1600
12 September 1965

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
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25X1

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12 September 1965

HIGHLIGHTS

Elements of the US 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) landed today at Qui Nhon in central coastal Binh Dinh Province. Soviet - North Vietnamese SAM sites continued active over the week end

25X1

no friendly planes were reported hit.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:

Elements of the US 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) landed early today at Qui Nhon, in central coastal Binh Dinh Province (Para. 1). The 1st Brigade/101st US Airborne Division continued its operation in Binh Dinh Province to permit the unopposed deployment of the 1st Cavalry Division to the An Khe area (Para. 2). Eighteen Guam-based USAF B-52 Stratofortresses last night conducted a saturation bombing attack against a suspected Viet Cong supply and transportation center in Binh Duong Province (Para. 3). Viet Cong forces lost 104 killed in a large ARVN search-and-destroy operation in Quang Nam Province on 5 September (Para. 4). US tactical air strikes yesterday are believed to have inflicted heavy casualties on a suspected Viet Cong regimental headquarters in Chuong Thien Province (Para. 5).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:

A military congress was held in Saigon yesterday for the publicly announced purpose of reaffirming the unity and solidarity of the South Vietnamese armed forces and to warn the military against corruption; the real aim of the meeting, however, was to assure continuing firm military control of all aspects of the government (Paras. 1-2).

III. Military Developments in North Vietnam:

Soviet - North Vietnamese SAM sites continued active over the week end

25X1

[redacted]
[redacted] DRV fighters
apparently reacted to US strike activity on 11-12
September, but no engagements have been reported
(Paras. 4-5).

25X1

IV. Other Communist Military Developments:
Bridge construction on the Sino-DRV border north-
west of Hanoi has been detected in photography [redacted]
[redacted] Improvements have also been made on
the road approaches to the bridge, which now links
sections of the Chinese Communist and North Viet-
namese road nets (Paras. 1-2).

25X1

25X1

25X1

V. Communist Political Developments: Hanoi
and Peking reiterate hard line (Paras. 1-2).

VI. Other Major Developments: A summary of
US strike activity and results of ROLLING THUNDER
30 (3-9 September) is included (Paras. 1-5).

12 September 1965

25X1

SOUTH VIETNAM

25X1



25X1

I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Elements of the US 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) moved ashore early today at Qui Nhon, in central coastal Binh Dinh Province. The first of four aircraft carriers, six troop ships, and 10 cargo ships are currently in position off Qui Nhon. The aircraft carrier USS BOXER, arrived Friday and commenced unloading many of the 428 helicopters assigned to the division.

2. Meanwhile, the 1st Brigade/101st US Airborne Division continued its operation in Binh Dinh Province to secure strategic lateral Route 19 between Qui Nhon and An Khe to permit the unopposed deployment of the 1st Cavalry Division to the An Khe area. The operation, which has been in progress for several weeks, has thus far made no major contact with the Viet Cong. Enemy resistance has been limited to small arms and automatic weapons fire and sporadic grenade assaults. Cumulative Viet Cong losses to date stand at 36 killed, 18 wounded, 29 captured, and 278 suspects taken. American forces have thus far sustained casualties of three killed and 11 wounded.

3. Eighteen Guam-based USAF B-52 Stratofortresses last night conducted a saturation bombing attack against a suspected Viet Cong supply and transportation center in the Ho Be Woods, 17 miles northwest of Saigon, in Binh Duong Province. All of the aircraft successfully released their bombs on the target area and returned safely to Guam. No follow-up ground exploitation was planned.

4. A multibattalion ARVN search-and-destroy operation, initiated on 5 September 20 miles south of Da Nang, has thus far resulted in confirmed Viet Cong losses of 104 killed (44 by air strikes). Reports on government casualties are incomplete as of 8 September; however 22 ARVN soldiers had been killed and 62 wounded. A USMC battalion, recently withdrawn from "Operation PIRANHA" in northeast

12 September 1965

I-1

25X1

Quang Ngai Province, was committed yesterday to reinforce Vietnamese units in the Quang Nam operation.

5. In the Mekong Delta, US tactical aircraft reportedly flew more than 100 attack sorties yesterday against a suspected Viet Cong regimental headquarters, 150 miles southwest of Saigon, in Chuong Thien Province. Enemy losses were believed heavy.

6. Long Khanh Province, 40 miles northeast of Saigon, was the scene of intensified Viet Cong activity early yesterday, as Communist forces of undetermined strength simultaneously attacked three villages and placed mortar and small arms fire on the headquarters of the 10th ARVN Infantry Division at the provincial capital of Xuan Loc. One of the villages was reportedly overrun, but later retaken by government reaction forces. There is no official report yet on friendly casualties, believed to have been light to moderate.

7. An estimated 100 Viet Cong reportedly ambushed a South Korean reconnaissance patrol near Bien Hoa Air Base yesterday, killing one officer and wounding five enlisted men. The patrol consisted of elements from the ROK battalion providing security for the Korean engineer detachment at Di An.

8. According to press reports a Viet Cong district chief, accused of being responsible for several assassinations and collecting Viet Cong taxes, was publicly executed by firing squad in Quang Ngai City, the capital of Quang Ngai Province on 6 September.

9. MACV's military reports for 9 and 10 September show a combined total of 162 Communist-initiated incidents, 15 of which occurred during the 48-hour period. No significant new actions were reported, as widespread small-scale terrorism, harassment, and sabotage continued.

12 September 1965

I-2

25X1

II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. A military congress was held in Saigon yesterday, purportedly to reaffirm the unity and solidarity of the South Vietnamese armed forces and to warn the military against corruption. The real aim of the meeting, however, was to assure continuing firm military control of all aspects of the government. In addition to the armed forces congress, one regimental commander from each division, one battalion commander from each regiment, and one company commander from each battalion were among those in attendance.

2. Addressing the gathering (which according to press reports included more than 2,000 officers), Premier Ky stated that the Viet Cong monsoon offensive had apparently fizzled out and that the military situation in South Vietnam had been stabilized. Major General Thieu, the Chief of State, outlined the role of the military in maintaining its leadership of the nation, stressing that there was no question of permitting a civilian government to take over now.

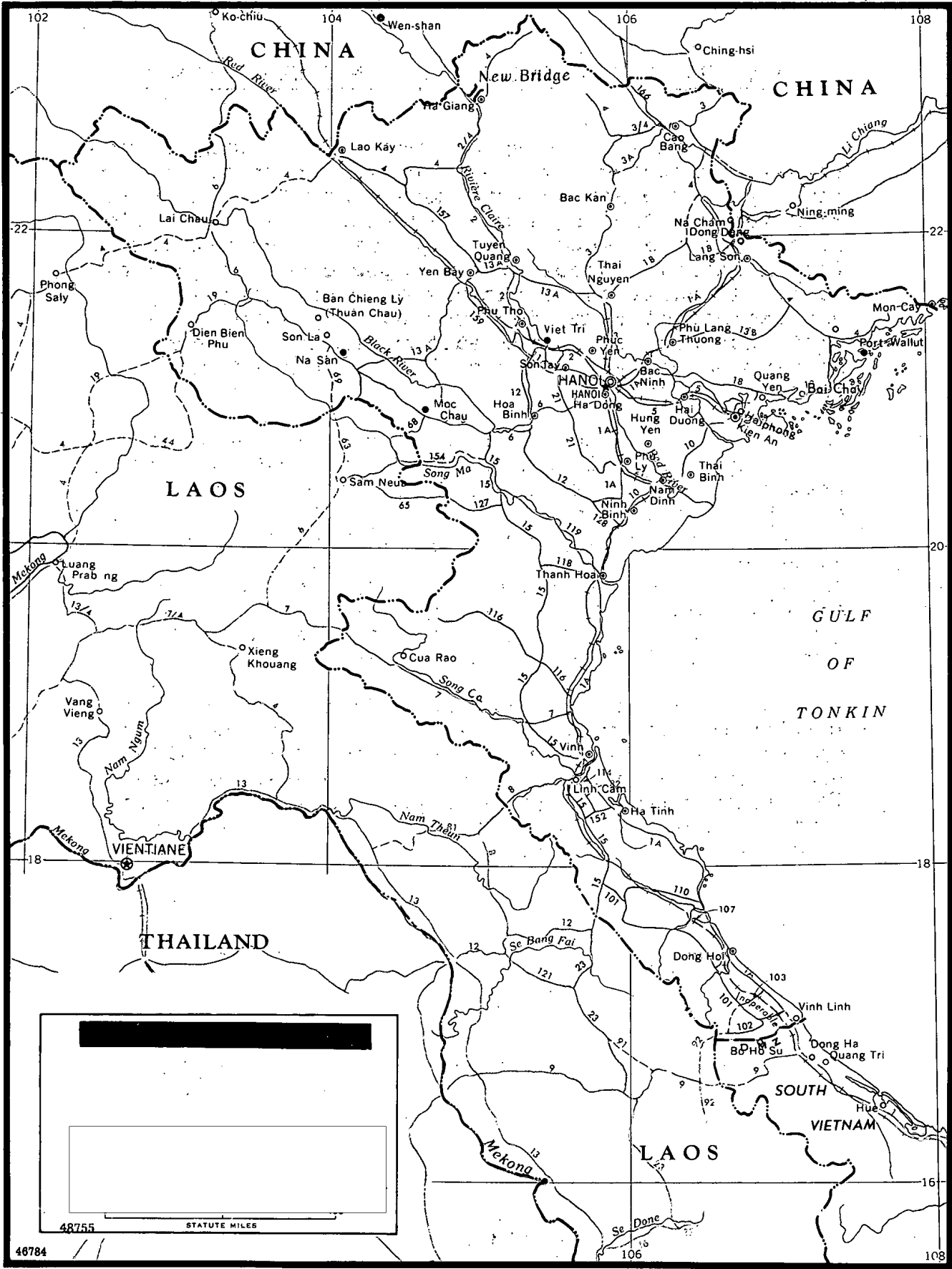
3. The South Vietnamese Government yesterday confiscated the morning edition of one of Saigon's two English-language newspapers, the Saigon Daily News. The seizure was reportedly ordered because of a front-page photograph depicting American marines hovering over the bodies of several Viet Cong whose hands had been tied behind their backs.

12 September 1965

II-1

25X1

NORTH VIETNAM



25X1

III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. SAM sites in North Vietnam continued active on 11-12 September. No actual missile launches were noted on the 11th

25X1

4. DRV MIG fighters were reflected in possible reactions to US strike activity on 11 and 12 September. The reaction of the 11th occurred while US planes were about 50 nautical miles southwest of Phuc Yen Air Base.

25X1

The point of closest approach was about 12 nautical miles. No engagement took place.

5. A second possible reaction was noted on 12 September. The US flight which apparently triggered this reaction was approximately 55 nautical miles west of Hanoi and moving south, when the Phuc Yen - based flight was first noted. The closest approach to the US flight was eight nautical miles.

25X1

12 September 1965

III-1

25X1

IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. Transportation routes between the north-western DRV and Communist China have been improved, according to analysis of [] photography. A new bridge, possibly made of stone, has been built over a river on the border, and the roads on either side of it improved. These improvements now provide a border crossing point between Wen Shan in China and Ha Giang in the DRV, linking the Chinese road net with national route 2 toward Hanoi. Some 31 cargo trucks were noted parked at the edge of the road and in a small rest-refueling area just over the border in China.

25X1

2. Farther north, an 18-mile section of the road from Kunming to Mengtzu contained 60 vehicles. However, the quality of photography did not permit determination of the direction of travel.

25X1

12 September 1965

IV-1

25X1

V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. North Vietnam used the ceremonies marking the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Fatherland Front to reiterate its determination to continue the war in Vietnam. A statement issued by the Front central committee at the anniversary meeting on 10 September expressed confidence in an eventual Communist victory in Vietnam and repeated previous Hanoi declarations that the Vietnamese are prepared to go on fighting for as long as necessary. Asserting that the US was suffering increasingly heavier defeats, the Front statement called upon all elements of the Vietnamese population to participate in the war effort and declared that the only answer the Vietnamese had for US proposals of unconditional discussions was "determination to defeat the US."

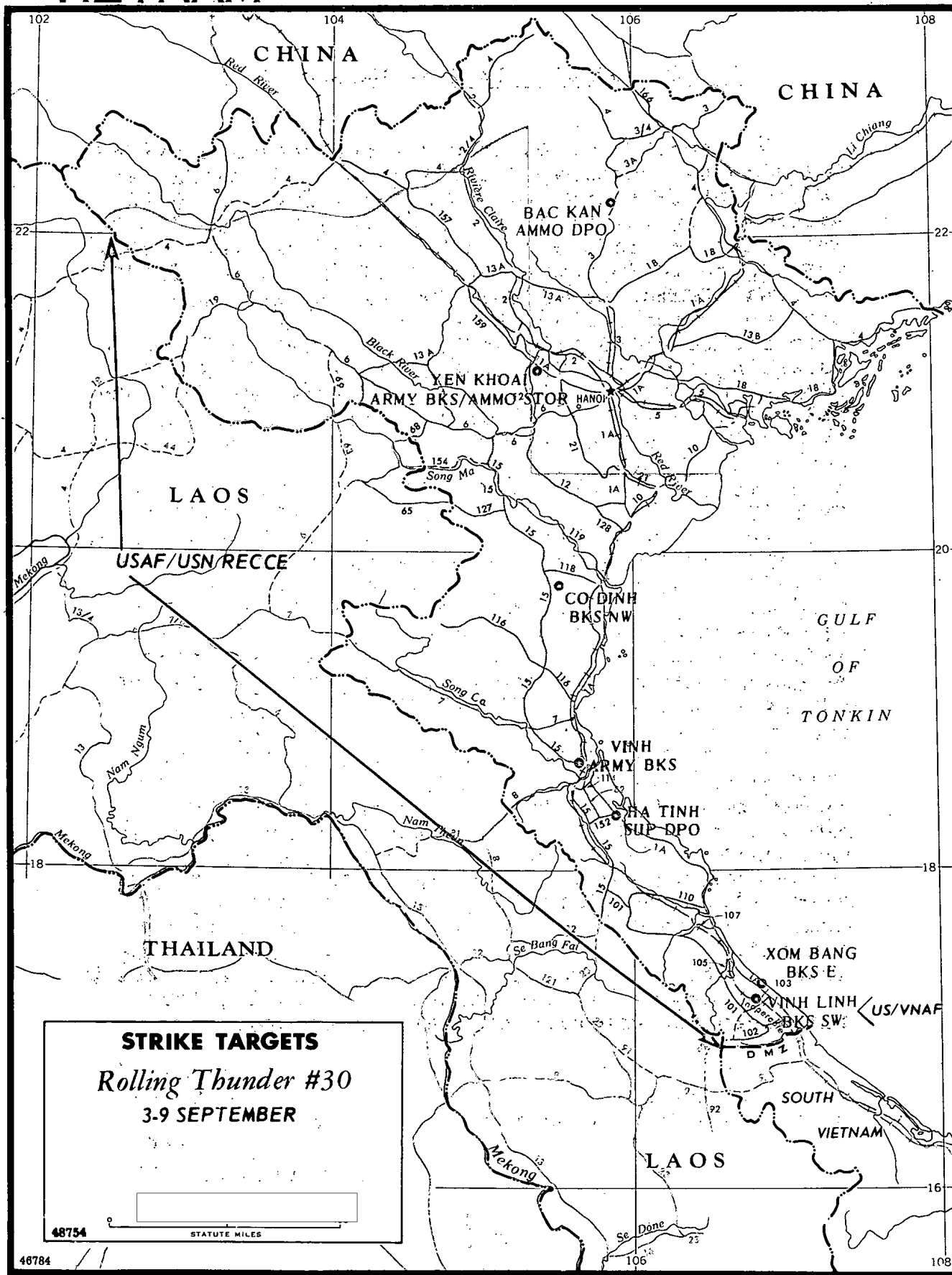
2. Peking again underscored its hard line toward negotiations on Vietnam in an interview Chou En-lai granted to a correspondent of the Middle East News Agency on 8 September. An NCNA account of the interview on 12 September quoted Chou as declaring that there could be no compromise solution of the Vietnam problem in exchange for the "restoration" of Chinese membership in the UN. He said that the UN "has no right to meddle" in the Vietnam question. Chou alleged that the Vietnamese were growing "ever stronger" in their struggle against the US, and repeated Peking's position that the "only way" to solve the Vietnamese problem was for the US to "respect" the 1954 Geneva agreement and withdraw its armed forces from South Vietnam.

12 September 1965

V-1

25X1

NORTH VIETNAM



VI. OTHER ASPECTS

1. US and South Vietnamese aircraft conducted strikes against seven primary targets during the period 3-9 September (ROLLING THUNDER 30 package). In addition, a large number of day and night armed reconnaissance sorties were flown along both major and minor DRV lines of communication. None of the primary targets had been struck previously.

2. The most significant aspect of this week's activity concerned the step-up in surface-to-air missile firings by Soviet/Vietnamese jointly manned sites in several different areas of the country. Five firings took place on four separate days. All were unsuccessful.

3. The Ha Tinh army barracks, south of Vinh, were struck on two occasions, with pilots reporting that 17 buildings were destroyed and 32 damaged. The Bac Kan ammunition depot, located some 40 miles from the Chinese border, was attacked on two occasions. Pilots reported destroying 11 buildings and three ammunition bunkers, while damaging five buildings and two bunkers. Only moderate damage was inflicted on the Xom Bang Barracks East in one strike on 6 September.

4. Another portion of the Vinh complex, the Vinh army Barracks Northwest, was struck on three occasions. Pilots reported moderate damage to the facility, with at least 13 buildings destroyed and 17 damaged. The Co Dinh barracks area, west of Thanh Hoa, was struck on two separate occasions, with pilots reporting 17 buildings destroyed and some 24 damaged. The Yen Khoai army barracks and ammunition storage facility, an artillery training area located some 28 miles west of Hanoi, was struck on 9 September. Pilots reported destroying four buildings and damaging at least 35 others.

5. The only combined US/Vietnamese strike of the week was conducted on 9 September against one part of the Vinh Linh army complex near the

Demilitarized Zone. Pilots report heavy damage to the area. Some 9,000 toys for children were dropped along the coast during the week in psychological operations.

6. The following figures represent the total effort of ROLLING THUNDER 30 armed reconnaissance sorties. These figures are based wholly on pilot reports and in the majority of cases cannot be confirmed or denied from photography. In addition, damage at many targets cannot be assessed initially due to poor weather, darkness, or smoke and dust from exploding ordnance.

Results of ROLLING THUNDER 30
Armed Reconnaissance Strikes

	<u>Destroyed</u>	<u>Damaged</u>
Buildings	109	111
Bridges	25	65
Bridge Approaches	-	39
Ships, Boats, Barges	32	35
Ferries	-	3
Ferry Crossings,		
Approaches, Slips	-	4
Vehicles	20	27
Rolling Stock	9	35
AAA Sites	1	9
Roads	-	83
Truck Parks	-	4
Military Barracks Areas	-	2
Rail Lines	-	6
Communications Sites	-	2
Radar Sites	-	2
POL Storage areas	-	1
Coastal Defense Sites	1	-
Runways	-	2
Highway Construction Sites	-	1
Ammunition Bunkers	-	-

12 September 1965

7. Eight US aircraft were shot down during this week's activity, bringing the total number of US aircraft lost through 9 September to 102. Three of the pilots involved have been rescued.

12 September 1965

VI-3

25X1

TOP SECRET